

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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DEPARTMENT PASS FAA

ROME FOR RCAA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, IN, BEXP, ETRD
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF "THIRD LEVEL"
AIRLINE IN INDIA

REF: (A) NEW DELHI 1191, (B) ROME 1603

1. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO RECENT PRESS COVERAGE AND REPORTING FROM CONGEN BOMBAY (SEE REF A), COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR CALLED ON INDIAN AIRLINES PLANNING MANAGER, J.K. CHAUDHURI, FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONCERNING PLANNING FOR POSSIBLE "THIRD LEVEL" INDIAN AIRLINE.

2. CHAUDHURI CONFIRMED GENERAL VERACITY OF NEWSPAPER REPORT. IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION, HE HAD DRAFTED FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR FORMATION OF A "THIRD LEVEL" AIRLINE DESIGNED TO EXTEND AIR SERVICE TO CERTAIN SHORT-HAUL, LOW-DENSITY ROUTES, PRESSURE FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH HAD COME FROM REGIONAL BODIES, LOCAL BUSINESSMEN, AND CERTAIN MEMBERS OF LOK SABHA.

3. OWING TO PRESENT COMPOSITION OF INDIAN AIRLINES FLEET, CENTERED ON HIGH-CAPACITY JET AIRCRAFT (TWELVE 737'S AND THREE AIRBUSES), INDIAN AIRLINES NOT INTERESTED IN TEXTENDING ITSELF INTO SHORT-HAUL, LOW-DENSITY OPERATIONS.

4. THE FEASIBILITY REPORT, CHAUDHURI SAID, HAD OUTLINED A SERIES OF POSSIBLE NEW AIR ROUTES, BASED ON USE OF SOME 50 OF THE 200 SMALLER AIR FIELDS CONSTRUCTED THROUGHOUT INDIA DURING WORLD WAR II AND WHICH SINCE THEN HAVE LAIN LARGELY UNUSED. THESE FIELDS COULD BE REPAIRED FOR USE BY LIGHTER AIRCRAFT WITHOUT EXCESSIVE EXPENSE. CHAUDHURI MENTIONED GUJARAT AND NEIGHBORING AREAS OF MAHARASHTRA AND RAJASTHAN IN WESTERN INDIA AS ONE ZONE WHERE "THIRD LEVEL" AIRLINE COULD OPERATE USEFULLY. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT AREA FROM VIEW-POINT OF PRESENT LACK OF COMMUNICATIONS, IS ASSAM AND SIX SMALLER NEIGHBORING STATES IN NORTH-EAST INDIA. BOTH AREAS CHARACTERIZED BY HILLY TERRAIN, DENSE POPULATION AND OFTEN INADEQUATE ROAD AND RAILROAD LINKS.

5. CHAUDHURI EMPHASIZED FEASIBILITY STUDY REPRESENTED ONLY FIRST STAGE IN PLANNING PROCESS FOR FORMATION OF POSSIBLE NEW "THIRD-LEVEL" AIRLINE. MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION WILL NOW HAVE TO EXAMINE STUDY, AND THEN CAPITAL COSTS INVOLVED IN AIRCRAFT PURCHASES, ETC. (INITIALLY ESTIMATED AT ABOUT US \$30 MILLION) MUST BE CONSIDERED BY PLANNING COMMISSION AND MINISTRY OF FINANCE AGAINST OTHER IMPORTANT NATIONAL PRIORITIES. CHAUDHURI NOT WILLING MAKE ANY PREDICTIONS AS TO OUTCOME SUCH DELIBERATIONS, BUT NOTED JANATA GOVERNMENT EMPHASIS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWAY FROM LARGE POPULATION CENTERS, WHICH FITS IN WITH IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BACKWARD AREAS OF NORTH-EAST.

6. WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE AIRCRAFT PURCHASES IF FEASIBILITY STUDY EVENTUALLY APPROVED, CHAUDHURI SAID FIGURE OF TWENTY AIRCRAFT MENTIONED IN NEWSPAPER REPORT WAS ONLY A BROADLY INDICATIVE FIGURE FOR START OF OPERATIONS. ANY REQUIREMENT FOR EIGHT AIRCRAFT WOULD BE "VERY FAR DOWN THE LINE" FROM INITIAL PLANS.

7. OWING TO PRELIMINARY NATURE OF FEASIBILITY STUDY, NO INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT EVALUATION IS YET CONTEMPLATED, BUT AIRCRAFT TYPES WHICH WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR SERVICE ON PROPOSED ROUTES INCLUDE, ACCORDING TO CHAUDHURI, CESSNA AND PIPER AIRCRAFT IN 15 TO 20-SEAT CATEGORY, AS WELL AS DE-HAVILLAND TWIN OTTER (CANADA), NOMAD (AUSTRALIA), AND BRITTON-NORMAN ISLANDRE (UK).

8. SHOULD NEW THIRD-LEVEL AIR ORGANIZATION BE ESTABLISHED, CHAUDHURI ENVISAGES INDIAN AIRLINES MAXIMUM ROLE AS THAT OF PROVIDING SOME ADVISORY ASSISTANCE. EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER ON "THIRD LEVEL" AIRLINE IF ANY FORWARD MOVEMENT IS PERCEIVED IN PLANNING PROCESS, WHICH MAY WELL BE STRETCHED

OVER CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME.

9. COMMENT. ABOVE PLANS FOR "THIRD LEVEL" AIRLINE EFFEC-
TIVELY NEGATE REPORT IN PARA 3, REF B CONCERNING I.A. LETTER
OF INTENT TO PURCHASE FIVE FOKKER F-28 MARK 4000'S. CHAUD-
HURI SAID F-28 HAD BEEN EXAMINED AND REJECTED AS NOT COM-
PETITIVE WITH ADDITIONAL 737'S IN VIEW OF PRESENT I.A.
FLEET COMPOSITION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 26-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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